

POSSIBLE WORLD CONSEQUENCES OF MILITARY ACTION

The consequences of military action may be considered under two headings: First, the effect on our alliances; and second, possible Sino-Soviet responses at various vulnerable points around the world.

1. Effect on Alliances

The effect of military action on our Alliances would depend to a considerable extent upon accompanying diplomatic moves, both prior and subsequent. The key elements would be the degree of consultation with our allies; the nature of the notice given to our allies; the opportunity given to both Castro and Khrushchev to take present military attack by making adequate concessions; and, finally, the nature of any measures taken simultaneously with military action or immediately thereafter to bring about consultation with the Soviet Union. Also relevant would be the character and severity of the military action itself.

If little or no opportunity were provided for consultation with our allies -- or alternatively if they were given only brief advance notice of our action -- the chances of damage to our alliances would be greatly enhanced. Moreover, if we were to act not only without consulting our allies but also without providing either the Cubans or Russians with an opportunity

opportunity to avoid attack, we might put ourselves in the eyes of the world in a position similar to that of Britain and France at the time of Suez -- with irrevocable harm both to NATO and the OAS.

A. Effect on NATO

Unless adequate political preparations were made prior to military action we could not expect to receive sympathy or support from any of the major NATO powers. If the Soviet Union were to respond vigorously -- for example, by moving against Berlin -- the United States might be held responsible in European eyes for having endangered its allies in a reckless manner.

European nations are clearly not sympathetic with the United States position regarding Cuba. They regard our reaction to the recent Soviet buildup as hysteria; many have argued that our national preoccupation with Cuba proves that we are not fully responsible and should not have such a large influence in deciding the fate of the Free World. Since the Europeans live with 400 MRBM's pointed at them every day, they cannot be persuaded that the location of a few batteries of MRBM's in Cuba is a serious military threat to the United States. For us to respond to that threat by unilateral military action

would seem

would seem to them, therefore, out of all proportion to the provocation and a reckless act endangering the peace of the world.

We might expect Khrushchev to seek to capitalize on this European reaction. He would try to increase the division and disarray of the West.

To an extent, of course, the European reaction would depend on the speed and decisiveness of the military action as well as on its character, i.e., whether limited or general. It would also depend to some extent upon the steps we might take to follow up that action -- that is, whether or not we would seek immediate discussion with the Soviet Union.

B. The OAS

The shock of United States action against Cuba might well result in the Communist takeover of several Latin American Governments. (Develop).

2. Possible Sino-Soviet Responses

A. Berlin

If we were to take military action against Cuba, Khrushchev might well respond with direct military action against Berlin. His temptation to do so would be affected by

two circumstances.

two circumstances. First, the extent of the apparent disarray in the NATO Alliance; and second, the degree to which we had committed United States forces to Cuba. If the effect of our action were to produce a considerable appearance of division within NATO, Khrushchev might well believe that he could safely move against Berlin -- particularly if he joined this action with some diplomatic gestures toward West Germany and possibly Britain and France. If we should have -- as it is estimated we might have in the event of an invasion of Cuba -- 90 to 150 thousand men immobilized, Khrushchev could well feel that he could move against Berlin without danger of effective American military resistance.

B. Turkey

Khrushchev could argue, in a manner that might persuade a substantial part of world opinion, that if the United States found it intolerable to have MRBM's near its borders in Cuba, he could not accept to have MRBM's on Soviet borders in Turkey. He might, therefore, attempt a quick strike at Turkey.

C. Iran

Khrushchev might also attempt to justify some aggressive action against Iran on the ground that it also contains US
installations